

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6505

As of January 30, 2008

Title: An act relating to nutrition labeling of food.

Brief Description: Concerning nutrition labeling of food.

Sponsors: Senator Tom.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Health & Long-Term Care: 1/31/08.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG-TERM CARE

Staff: Rhoda Donkin (786-7465)

Background: Obesity, heart disease, diabetes and other chronic illnesses related to diet have become leading public health concerns in this country. Obesity rates have doubled in the last 20 years. Currently, 65 percent of adults are over weight or obese according to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). Obesity rates have doubled in children and the incidence of diabetes in children is higher than ever before.

Numerous approaches to improving our diets are part of a national discussion. In recent years, restaurant food has received increasing attention, partly because eating away from home now consumes nearly half of Americans' food dollars, double what it was 30 years ago. According to one report, the average American consumes about one-third of their calories from restaurant foods, and children eat almost twice as many calories when they eat a meal in a restaurant as they do at home.

In 1990, the federal Nutrition Labeling and Education Act required food manufacturers to provide nutrition information on nearly all packaged foods. Restaurants were exempted from this requirement. There is concern that because of widespread obesity and chronic disease, consumers need to know what they are eating when they dine out.

Summary of Bill: Chain restaurants with at least 10 establishments nationwide who do business under the same name are required to provide nutrition information for all standard menu items. The nutrition information must include total number of calories, total grams of trans fat, total grams of saturated fat, total grams of carbohydrates, total milligrams of sodium. This information must be provided next to each standard item on the menu in a size and typeface similar to other information about the item. Chain food restaurants that use a menu board must post the total number of calories per menu item on the board in the same size and typeface as the other information. Other nutritional information about the food items

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must be available on printed menus, pamphlets, brochures, or other documents available at the time of purchase.

Menus at chain food restaurants must state clearly and conspicuously the recommended daily consumption of calories, fats, and sodium, and a notification that trans fats increase risks of heart disease.

Documentation of the accuracy of the nutrition information provided to consumers in chain food restaurants will be available to the Department of Health upon request.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 23, 2008.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.